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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

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Human rights and extreme poverty

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[3] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[4] the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[5]

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[4] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[5] Ibid., vol. 660, No. 9464.

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the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[6] and other human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations,

Recalling its resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992, by which it declared 17 October the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and its resolution 62/205 of 19 December 2007, by which it proclaimed the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), as well as its resolution 63/175 of 18 December 2008 and its previous resolutions on human rights and extreme poverty, in which it reaffirmed that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them,

Recalling also its resolution 52/134 of 12 December 1997, in which it recognized that the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights was essential for the effective understanding, promotion and protection of all human rights,

Recalling further Human Rights Council resolutions 2/2 of 27 November 2006,[7] 7/27 of 28 March 2008,[8] 8/11 of 18 June 2008[9] and 12/19 of 2 October 2009,[10]

Recalling also Human Rights Council resolution 15/19 of 30 September 2010, in which it invited the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, on the basis of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to pursue further work on the draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights with a view to submitting a final draft of the revised guiding principles to the Council at its twenty-first session, in order to allow the Council to take a decision on the way forward with a view to the adoption by 2012 of guiding principles on the rights of persons living in extreme poverty,

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and welcoming the high-level plenary meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and recalling its outcome document contained in resolution 65/1 of 22 September 2010,

Deeply concerned that extreme poverty persists in all countries of the world, regardless of their economic, social and cultural situation, and that its extent and manifestations, such as hunger, trafficking in human beings, disease, lack of adequate shelter, illiteracy and hopelessness, are particularly severe in developing countries, while acknowledging the significant progress made in several parts of the world in combating extreme poverty,

Deeply concerned also that gender inequality, violence and discrimination exacerbate extreme poverty, disproportionally impacting women and girls,

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[6] Resolution 61/106, annex I.

[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/62/53), chap. I, sect. A.

[8] Ibid., *Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/63/53), chap. II.

[9] Ibid., chap. III, sect. A.

[10] See *Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/65/53).

Stressing that special attention should be given to children, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples who are living in extreme poverty,

Concerned by the challenges faced today, including those derived from the financial and economic crisis, the food crisis and ongoing concerns over food security, as well as the increasing challenges posed by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, and by their impact on the increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty and their negative effect on the capacity of all States, especially developing countries, to fight extreme poverty,

Recognizing that the eradication of extreme poverty is a major challenge within the process of globalization and requires coordinated and continued policies through decisive national action and international cooperation,

Recognizing also that social protection systems make a critical contribution to the realization of human rights for all, in particular for those who are in vulnerable or marginalized situations and are trapped in poverty and subject to discrimination,

Stressing the necessity of better understanding and addressing the causes and consequences of extreme poverty,

Reaffirming that, since the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and may, in some situations, constitute a threat to the right to life, its immediate alleviation and eventual eradication must remain a high priority for the international community,

Stressing that respect for all human rights, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, is of crucial importance for all policies and programmes to fight extreme poverty,

Reaffirming that democracy, development and the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing and contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty,

1. *Reaffirms* that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

2. *Also reaffirms* that it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in the societies in which they live, in the promotion of human rights and in efforts to combat extreme poverty, and that it is essential for people living in poverty and vulnerable groups to be empowered to organize themselves and to participate in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life, in particular the planning and implementation of policies that affect them, thus enabling them to become genuine partners in development;

3. *Emphasizes* that extreme poverty is a major issue to be addressed by Governments, civil society, community-based social organizations and the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, and in this context reaffirms that political commitment is a prerequisite for the eradication of poverty;

4. *Reaffirms* that the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and renders democracy and popular participation fragile;

5. *Recognizes* the need to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to address the most pressing social needs of people living in poverty, including through the design and development of appropriate mechanisms to strengthen and consolidate democratic institutions and governance;

6. *Reaffirms* the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[11] in particular the commitments to spare no effort to fight against extreme poverty and to achieve development and poverty eradication, including the commitment to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one United States dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger;

7. *Also reaffirms* the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all, including women and girls;[12]

8. *Further reaffirms* the commitment made at the high-level plenary meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals to accelerating progress in order to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;[13]

9. *Recalls* that promoting universal access to social services and providing social protection floors can make an important contribution to consolidating and achieving further development gains and that social protection systems that address and reduce inequality and social exclusion are essential for protecting the progress gains made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

10. *Encourages* States, when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating social protection programmes, to ensure gender mainstreaming, and the promotion and protection of all human rights in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law, through this process;

11. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts to strengthen and support South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation and stresses that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation;

12. *Encourages* the international community to strengthen its efforts to address challenges that are contributing to extreme poverty, including those derived from the financial and economic crisis, the food crisis and ongoing concerns over food security, as well as the increasing challenges posed by climate change and the loss of biodiversity in all parts of the world, especially in developing countries, by enhancing its cooperation to help build national capacities;

13. *Reaffirms* the critical role of both formal and informal education in the achievement of poverty eradication and other development goals as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration, in particular basic education and training for eradicating illiteracy, and efforts towards expanded secondary and higher education as well as vocational education and technical training, especially for girls and women, the creation of human resources and infrastructure capabilities and the empowerment of those living in poverty, and in this context reaffirms the Dakar Framework for

[11] See resolution 55/2.
[12] See resolution 60/1.
[13] See resolution 65/1.

Action adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000,[14] and recognizes the importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization strategy for the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty, in supporting the Education for All programmes as a tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015;

14. *Invites* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to give high priority to the question of the relationship between extreme poverty and human rights, and also invites her to further pursue the work in this area;

15. *Calls upon* States, United Nations bodies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to continue to give appropriate attention to the links between human rights and extreme poverty, and encourages the private sector and the international financial institutions to proceed likewise;

16. *Invites* States, as well as relevant United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations treaty bodies, relevant special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, especially those working with people living in extreme poverty, and other relevant stakeholders, to contribute to the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by expressing their views, comments and suggestions on the progress report on the draft guiding principles submitted by the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty;[15]

17. *Invites* the independent expert and relevant stakeholders, including representatives of States, development and human rights practitioners and organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels, to participate in the two-day consultation that the High Commissioner will organize, within existing resources, in Geneva before June 2011 on the progress report on the draft guiding principles;

18. *Welcomes* the efforts of entities throughout the United Nations system to incorporate the Millennium Declaration and the internationally agreed development goals set out therein into their work;

19. *Also welcomes* the work on social protection and human rights undertaken by the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty and her reports submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions;[16]

20. *Decides* to consider the question further at its sixty-seventh session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

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[14] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

[15] A/HRC/15/41.

[16] A/64/279 and A/65/259.